



Ambassador Hume with the Takalani Sesame HIV/AIDS muppet

BACKGROUND

Since 1994 the South African health system has been undergoing a transformation to allow historically disadvantaged individuals greater access to quality primary health care. Childhood immunizations, reproductive health, ante-natal care, and tuberculosis treatment and control programs have expanded, often with U.S. assistance. Still, much remains to be done to provide optimal health care for all South Africans.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa is a crisis. Twenty to twenty-five percent of the adult population is HIV infected – nearly five million men, women and children. Life expectancy is dropping significantly and 1.3 million AIDS orphans are expected by 2005. All segments of society are affected but skilled labor (teachers, nurses, police, military and miners) is especially affected, with severe economic and social implications. The government has well prepared HIV/AIDS plans and some programs – focused on prevention, research, treatment, care and support. However, the epidemic remains largely uncontrolled.

Many public and private U.S. organizations are heavily involved in cooperative health activities in South Africa. Of special importance, South Africa is eligible to participate in President Bush's new Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and its program to prevent the transmission of HIV from mothers to their children. This \$15 billion program could help South Africa begin to treat AIDS in the public health system while expanding prevention and care programs. South Africa also is a major recipient of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with 50% of its funding from the U.S.

WHAT IS THE U.S. MISSION DOING?

Working with the national and provincial Departments of Health, universities and NGOs to strengthen essential primary health care, disease surveillance and research through:

- Strengthening diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Providing immunization support.
- Developing sustainable health support systems (logistics, reporting and recording systems, communications).
- Helping control diarrheal disease.
- Strengthening NGOs.
- Enhancing child survival and maternal health programs.

Providing \$40 million annually for HIV/AIDS related activities such as:

- Public information and transmission prevention program targeting high-risk groups and mobile populations.
- Multiple research grants to demonstrate sustainability of anti-retroviral treatment, to develop new vaccines, and to assess behavioral factors influencing prevention.
- Military AIDS prevention and care programs.
- Programs with organizations doing community-based AIDS orphan care/support.
- Training counselors and facilitating voluntary testing.
- Programs to improve diagnosis and treatment of opportunistic infections.
- Preparation, printing and distribution of treatment/care guidelines and manuals.
- Workshops to train care givers and human rights activists.
- Home-based care programs for the HIV infected and affected in poor areas.

Working with U.S. and South African non-governmental organizations to improve public health and expand health care and research capacity.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- A system for tracking the inventory, availability and distribution of drugs is being expanded nationwide.
- South African scientists have completed essential research on HIV, child nutrition and basic biomedical questions.
- Centers for HIV research excellence established.
- Condoms are widely available, free of charge.
- Peace Corps volunteers have trained NGO's and communities to reduce risk behavior related to STI and HIV/AIDS, especially among youth.
- The management of STI's has improved through research assessing rapid diagnostic tests.
- A private sector HIV care, support and treatment initiative was launched after assessing the impact of AIDS.
- Industry, labor groups and the military have mounted effective HIV prevention programs.
- An electronic TB register operates in four provinces.
- Home-based HIV/AIDS care provided to 300, 000 people and a 24-hour AIDS helpline is functioning.



Mobile units assist remote communities with basic health care

U.S. FOUNDATIONS FUND HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Elisabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Kaiser Foundation
- Secure the Future Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Doris Duke Foundation
- Pangaza Foundation

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Help South African national and provincial health officials implement their TB plans and provide technical support to strengthen health support systems.
- Efforts to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS are increasing rapidly.
- Develop more cooperation on HIV/AIDS with the faith based community and support more community organizations through small self-help grants.
- Increase collaborative research and training to address chronic and infectious diseases, fetal alcohol syndrome, child sexual abuse, substance abuse.
- Encourage more union/business involvement in creating workplace HIV/AIDS policies.
- Train national and provincial HIV/AIDS managers in program management, planning, budgeting and supervision.
- Voluntary HIV counseling and testing services are expanding in all provinces.
- Assist HIV affected families to obtain home mortgage insurance.
- Develop with South African researchers a computer-based system to manage AIDS treatment.
- Support regional HIV/AIDS treatment and training centers in civilian and military sectors.



USEFUL WEBSITES

USAID:

<http://www.usaid.gov/>

Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>

National Institutes of Health:

<http://www.nih.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Department of State:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/hiv/>

Self-Help Program:

<Http://www.usembassy.state.gov/southafrica/>